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ABSTRACT

This report covers trends in discipline policies and policy-making and alternative and innovative school programs designed to diminsh behavioral problems in the classroom. The programs range from improvements in a school's physical plant to specific action plans for teachers and options in the curriculum designed to stimulate alienated students. Some of the programs are preventive; others serve as intervention measures. But characteristic of each is an emphasis on identifying and dealing with the root problem, rather than symptoms of the problem. The programs presented are intended as frameworks from which a school system may build a program based on its own resources and needs. The appendix offers sample discipline policies from three different school districts. (Author)

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NSBA NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Research Report 1979-2

Student Discipline: Practical Approaches

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Student Discipline: Practical Approaches

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Foreword

Ironically, problems associated with student discipline generally are dealt with in a remarkably undisciplined fashion.

Board members and school officials studying the matter often become entangled in an unproductive imbroglio of emotions. Teachers blame parents, parents blame the schools, administrators blame teachers and everybody blames students. All too often, systematic analysis, planning and implementation are not undertaken.

But in a number of districts, accusing fingers have ceased their futile pointing. This report examines some of the constructive ideas and programs that have resulted when placing blame ceases to be the principal reaction to student disciplinary problems.

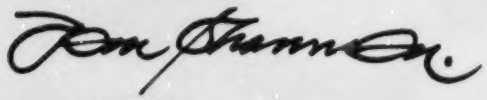
Some of the programs assembled in this report are preventive; others serve as intervention measures. But characteristic of each is an emphasis on identifying and dealing with the root problem, rather than symptoms of the problem. Increasingly, educators are adopting a more positive approach to prevent and cope with student misbehavior. The objective is to make students realize *why* they should improve their behavior. By contrast, the "sit down and shut up" approach may be on the way out. Nonetheless, many of the programs are "strict" in that their success depends on diligent adherence to predetermined guidelines.

This report covers trends in discipline policies and policy-making and alternative and innovative school programs designed to diminish behavioral problems in the classroom. The programs range from improvements in a school's physical plant to specific action plans for teachers and options in the curriculum designed to stimulate alienated students.

Every school district is unique in its location, facilities, students, staff, problems and accomplishments. The programs presented in this report

are therefore intended as frameworks from which a school system may build a program based on its own resources and needs.

One final note: school officials looking for a quick and easy solution to student disciplinary problems will not be cheered by this Research Report, for there are no simple, step-by-step solutions. Schools are, in a sense, microcosms of society. And it is safe to assume that schools are not likely to be trouble-free until American society itself becomes trouble-free. But effective steps can be taken. This Research Report examines some of these practical approaches.



Thomas A. Shannon
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Discipline Policies and Policy-Making

Discipline policies range from detailed road maps—outlining scores of specific rules of behavior and punishments for breaking those rules—to general statements which offer only a few simple guidelines for school personnel. In any case, the school board's discipline policy sets the tone for student discipline in the district.

Will the general approach to discipline be positive, stressing prevention, or will it take the other tack and emphasize punishment? Will teachers be flexible in meting out punishment, or will they strive for consistency? Will the atmosphere in the schools be strict or lenient? These areas, and others, are directly affected by the discipline policies adopted by the board.

More than ever before, educators have come to accept the importance of multilevel involvement in all areas of student discipline—from policy-making to designing and implementing programs. This involvement is evident, for example, in the discipline policy of the David Douglas Schools, a suburban district outside Portland, Ore. The David Douglas policy outlines the responsibilities of parents, students, teachers and staff, principals, school board members, district administrators, and the superintendent. (See Appendix.) Moreover, rather than simply being included in the policy itself, these various members of the school community were involved in developing the district's policy. As school superintendent Dr. Howard F. Horner put it, "No policy is worth its salt unless everyone can and will follow through. And in order for a student discipline policy to work, the total school community must be involved, beginning at ground zero."

Dr. Horner also stresses the importance of allowing enough time to gather comments and recommendations, to synthesize these ideas into a draft policy, to obtain feedback on the draft policy and, finally, to assemble the final policy.

While it can be cumbersome and time consuming, involving many individuals and groups in setting the district's discipline policies, there are advantages. Chief among them: the increased likelihood that such policies will be more widely understood and accepted. This sense of widespread understanding and consistency is an objective of a growing number of discipline policies. As the policy of Roxbury Township Public Schools, Succasunna, N.J., states, "It is extremely important that every pupil feel that *all* teachers stand together on matters of discipline. Of necessity, our standards of discipline must be uniform."

Other policies, while not actually spelling out the concept of consistency, foster the idea by listing specific rules and specifying punishments for their violation. At the same time, many policies support the uniform application of rules but caution against the implementation of *too many* rules. This idea is illustrated in the policy of the Milford Exempted Village School District, Milford, Ohio: "The essence of good discipline," the policy states, "is to have a few simple rules of good behavior which are to be implicitly obeyed throughout the school and to permit no infraction of these rules."

Many educators feel that an exhaustive list of rules, written to promote consistency, may in fact be detrimental; a long list increases the chance that students, parents, and teachers will neither understand nor accept all the rules. A proliferation of rules may also promote inconsistent administration by staff, many of whom may not be familiar with all the rules.

Positive approach

The current trend in discipline policy is a positive approach which outlines procedures in terms of "rights and responsibilities," rather than rules. This new terminology may be due, largely, to recent court cases which establish formal student "rights" in instances where discipline, suspension and expulsion are involved. Rather than stressing punishment, the positive approach to discipline policy-making fosters the idea of a productive school environment which promotes good behavior and thereby curtails the need for punishment. A statement in the policy of the Ames, Iowa, Community School District (see Appendix) is typical of ideas found in a growing number of policies across the country:

> "The goal of school discipline policies should be to ensure the right of all students to a productive educational environment in which they may learn the social skills necessary to develop into mature, responsible young adults, accountable for their own actions."

The concept of self-discipline also is emerging in many recent policies. This idea, however, is not tantamount to carte blanche freedom or relaxed standards. The coexistence of a strict code of conduct and the notion of student self-discipline is implicit in many policies, such as the one adopted by the Milford, Ohio schools:

> "Even though the ultimate aim is self-discipline, the authority of teachers and principals is necessary as children are led slowly and very gradually to the point where they can participate in the disciplining of themselves. It is wise to give freedom to children, but it is possible only where children have demonstrated that they can accept freedom by using it wisely."

Even though schools play an important part in instilling and enforcing positive behavior, discipline is not solely the responsibility of the schools. Discipline begins in the home, and many educators are making this case in public at a time when the public views lack of student discipline as the number one problem facing schools. The Ames policy reflects the responsibility of parents in the discipline partnership:

> "Parents must be the first to foster self-discipline within the child at home; the school provides an environment in which this training can be developed further. . . ."

A growing number of district discipline policies more specifically outline parents' responsibilities, alongside those of students and school personnel. Such policies often spell out conventional parental obligations, such as the obligation to send children to school and the need to help students develop socially acceptable standards of behavior. To further highlight parents' responsibilities, many school districts now send copies of the board's discipline policy to all parents. The goal: to make parents aware of the rights, responsibilities, rules and regulations that govern student behavior in the schools.

A comprehensive policy

The Jim Thorpe, Penn., School Board has developed a discipline policy which encompasses many of the ideas discussed in this chapter. (See Appendix.) Curiously, while most school programs are implemented according to goals and objectives established in a preceding board policy, the Jim Thorpe policy was modeled after a successful discipline program in the district's high school.

Back in 1972, the students at Jim Thorpe Junior-Senior High School proposed a de-

merit system. After meetings of student and faculty committees, the proposal was submitted to the board of education, which approved the idea. The result: an elaborate system which paired a variety of behavior infractions with a specified number of points. Punishment was then based on the number of accumulated points.

"This program worked so well," explains Principal Virginia Landgreen, "that we were able to drop it last year." According to Landgreen, the students became so familiar with the system, that after a while the disincentives—the demerits—were no longer needed. The demerit system was discontinued, and Landgreen is now thinking of reintroducing it once every few years to indoctrinate students coming into the school for the first time.

The policy outlines explicit responsibilities and punishments for infractions of rules. As such, it promotes consistency. At the same time, however, the policy allows for flexibility by emphasizing the need for open and regular communication among parents, teachers and students. Although there are specific rules and sanctions for violating each rule, the policy also implies that each student's case should be treated individually. Further, the Jim Thorpe policy endorses the positive, preventive approach to discipline by recommending that teachers contact parents at the first signs of a behavioral problem, rather than waiting until it gets out of control.

As discussed earlier, many educators now consider the involvement of many actors—students, parents, school staff and other members of the school "family"—a vital ingredient in any plan to alleviate student disciplinary problems. Indeed, the Jim Thorpe demerit system originally was proposed by students, and the board policy which grew out of the system recognizes the need for this type of involvement:

> "Students have an inherent right and responsibility to be cognizant of and instrumental in the preparation of school policies and regulations relevant to their curricular activities, extracurricular activities, and school environment."

The successful discipline policy, then, takes into account the needs and attitudes of the total school community. No policy, however, can single-handedly eliminate student behavioral problems. Moreover, policy is only as effective as the efforts on the part of all involved to create a conducive learning environment. The chapters that follow describe some of the more productive efforts toward this end.

Instructional Improvements—Decreasing Alienation

Alienation and disruption often go hand-in-hand; chances are good the student who feels apart from—or uninterested in—the school will, in turn, reject the school environment. Frequently, behavior problems stem from alienation which results when institutions fail to meet the needs of students. Recognizing this, school officials across the country have established programs specifically designed to be more responsive to these disoriented students.

These programs range from relatively uncomplicated discussion groups to in-school suspension rooms and elaborate instructional options. Many educators contacted in the preparation of this report emphasized the importance of fostering a feeling of "belonging" in students. The student who feels uncomfortable in a classroom may be no better off in an alternative education setting.

Combating class-cutting

For many school districts, truancy and class-cutting are the most prevalent student disciplinary problems. Dr. James Gaddy, principal of New Rochelle High School (N.Y.) described a program his school created to help combat cutting. With the help of a "mini grant" from the New Rochelle School Board, project AIDS (Administrative Involvement with Disaffected Students) was launched last year.

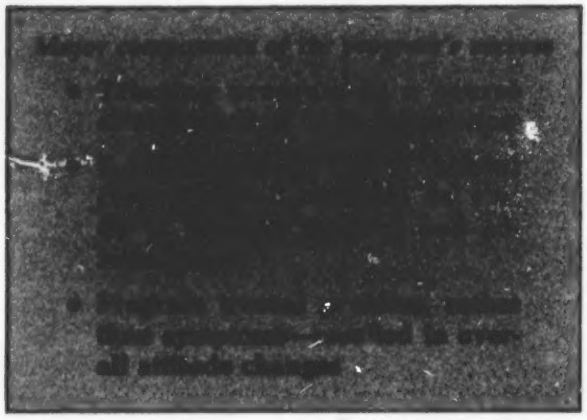
Twenty students recommended by local administrators participated in the inaugural year of AIDS. Once a week during rotating class periods, the students attended a series of meetings with school administrators, the school psychologist, social worker and other staff. The meetings were treated as a course, "Perspectives in Education," and participants were given an elective credit. According to Dr. Gaddy, the course had two basic objectives: to foster informal interaction between students and school staff and to give students a better understanding of the school system and school policies and procedures.

From the in-school "course," school officials admit they were surprised to learn that students knew so little about the workings of the school. The vast majority of the students, for example, believed guidance counselors meted out punishment. Parents of students in the AIDS program also met with students and school staff in informal meetings. The setting for one "meeting," for example, was a buffet dinner. Interestingly, just as the students had misconceptions about school staff and policies and procedures, so too did their parents. Frequently parents' only previous contacts with the school had occurred when their son or daughter was in trouble.

Perhaps because they gained a greater understanding of the school and individual school staff, the AIDS students generally began to attend class more frequently. Dr. Gaddy credits the course with a 75 percent reduction in the amount of class cutting.

Moreover, the students involved in the program now feel free to approach administrators and talk about problems or ac-

complishments. If former AIDS students do cut, more often than not they voluntarily go to the principal with an explanation. As Dr. Gaddy notes, the explanation may not always be acceptable, but the effort to explain at least indicates a sense of responsibility which many students formerly did not exhibit.



Effective disciplinary measures most likely incorporate both punitive sanctions—serving as a deterrent—and educationally sound objectives. This is the idea behind in-school suspension, a concept which is catching on in all types of school districts throughout the U.S. Increasingly, educators are moving away from the use of out-of-school suspension and expulsion, measures which bar students from an institution where they would rather not be anyway.

Additionally, in-school suspension makes sense educationally in that students do not necessarily fall behind in their work. As H.E.W.'s report, *School Crime and Disruption*, says, " . . . (I)ncompetence or failure in school can be seen as a major provocation to delinquent behavior." Suspending a student from school—which would result in his missing classwork—further lowers his chances for achievement, and therefore tends to produce more negative behavior, creating a vicious-circle effect.

In-school suspension centers

Like hundreds of others in the mid-1970s, the Pittsburgh schools had been plagued by a spiraling number of student suspensions. In an attempt to reverse this trend, the district created the Learning Adjustment Center (LAC) in Knoxville Middle School. Having proved successful, the program now operates in all ten of Pittsburgh's middle schools and in two of the district's elementary schools.

When a student in the Pittsburgh system has been formally suspended, he or she is offered the choice of spending the suspension time in the LAC. If the student chooses this option, he must sign a contract which outlines the rules and regulations of the LAC. A copy of this contract is mailed home to parents. According to Brian White, associate director of Pittsburgh's Middle Schools, parents of suspended students exert a great deal of pressure on their sons and daughters, encouraging them to attend the LAC.

Punitive and positive

LAC serves up a strictly regulated educational fare. Each student is isolated and regimented; talking and socializing are restricted. Thus, in-school suspension becomes unattractive to students and effectively serves as a deterrent to student misbehavior. The results of a survey conducted by White in June 1977 revealed that 80 percent of the students who had been suspended in the LAC felt in-school suspension was more difficult and more unpleasant than suspension at home. In spite of the stringent regulations, the approach in the LAC's is not negative. Individualized learning and remediation are emphasized—students are not given busywork. In addition, each student receives a good deal of individual counseling.

Each school has a LAC; each LAC has a slightly different instructional program which varies according to its own needs. One LAC is staffed by parent volunteers, another uses a para-professional, while most others use teacher duty periods.

Wide-range support

"The most essential element in a successful in-school suspension program is staffing,"

White contends. "The overall effectiveness is largely determined by the level of parental, staff and administrative support. It would be futile to impose such a program on an unwilling school."

And support the LAC programs do have. "Parents are especially pleased with the program," White observes, citing two reasons. First, the program presents "a favorable image of the school to sectors of the community (parents and students) that often felt alienated." And second, "parents see the schools attempting to deal constructively with disciplinary problems and not just throwing students out into the street."

While White stresses that in-school suspension is not a panacea—certain groups of students generate high recidivism—he points out that the suspension rate (including in-school suspensions) in 1977 was about half that of the year before, and that, in general, discipline has improved in the schools.

Major components of the program's success

- **Supportive, dedicated staff**
- **Parental support—program promoted good [illegible] relations**
- **Strictness of the program makes it a deterrent; [illegible] LACs emphasize [illegible] remediation and counseling**
- **Students [illegible] involved in their class assignments**
- **Individualized attention helps students and instructors get a better feeling for root causes of the behavior problem**

The Continuing Education Center (CEC) at Minnesota's Prior Lake High School "rose out of the need to develop a more humanistic manner of dealing with student behavior problems," says school principal Dan Dahlgren.

Similar to Pittsburgh's LAC but broader in its scope, the CEC is staffed by a certified teacher. As in the LAC, students are given individual attention and are required to complete class assignments. Seniors are not eligible for the program; rather, the program is geared to reach and motivate 15- and 16-year-old students.

In addition to being an in-school suspension center, however, the CEC offers students an opportunity to participate in a work-study program. Students in this program leave school two hours early to work on a job. The work-study program was initiated last year in an attempt to decrease the student dropout rate and, according to Dahlgren, has been successful.

Small-group counseling

It's a problem that plagues scores of school officials: the repeat offender; the seemingly incorrigible student for whom no disciplinary measures seem to work. Perplexed and frustrated like many of his peers, Julius Fuchs, a counselor for special classes at North Junior High School in Pittsfield, Mass., developed the Behavioral Attitude Change Program (BAC).

BAC takes a small-group counseling approach. Fuchs leads discussion groups which, to ensure effectiveness, do not exceed eight students. The program comprises three interdependent phases: introduction, discussion and follow-up.

In the introduction phase, Fuchs outlines the program's goals and objectives. At the same time, the student explains how he got into trouble and identifies those things that are important to him.

The second stage—the main part of the program—is built around group discussion. Students, who remain in the program until Fuchs believes they are fully committed to improving their behavior, are encouraged to openly share their attitudes toward their

homes, teachers, classmates, classes and school in general. Students are guaranteed that their comments will go no further than the discussion room. This freedom to explore problems is necessary if meaningful solutions are to be developed, Fuchs maintains.

Students in the program are motivated in part by rewards. For instance, a student showing noticeable improvement might be taken out to lunch. Or, the BAC instructor might send a letter home informing parents of improvements. According to Fuchs, the students begin to work toward the goal of having a favorable letter sent home.

The final stage of the program is follow-up. Fuchs believes it is vitally important to maintain contact with the students after they have left the discussion group. Such contacts help reinforce positive behavior. As part of this phase, progress is also checked with the students' teachers and with administrators.

As the Behavioral Attitude Change name suggests, the program aims not only to eliminate the recurrence of poor behavior, but to alter students' attitudes toward behavior; to help students understand that the "payoff" for good behavior is more than just avoiding punishment.

Major components of the program's success

- **Small groups increase interaction and a sense of belonging**
- **Students gain sense that someone cares through individual attention**
- **Focuses on attitudes and values—treats problems, not symptoms**
- **Rewards reinforce the will to achieve and increase self-esteem**
- **Parental involvement leads to encouragement, reinforcement at home**

Of course, not every school or school district has the resources, or the inclination, to undertake major program innovations to alleviate student disciplinary problems. But fruitful changes can be made on a smaller scale.

A 1975 task force established by the Berea, Ohio, School Board examined the student discipline problem and issued a report which emphasized the need to involve the administration, board members, school staff and parents in any solutions. After a year of work, the task force issued four recommendations: that the district work to improve human relations in the schools through more interaction between students and adults; that additional instructional support be given to students with learning problems; that the district's graduation requirements be examined; and that teachers work to make more efficient use of classroom time.

As a result of these general recommendations, a variety of changes were made in the district's high schools. The counseling system was modified to permit students to change counselors, and the counseling services were expanded.

The interior of one district high school was painted and redecorated in bright colors. The new interior decorating was greeted with such enthusiasm, that officials plan to do the same in the district's other high school. Curiously, contrary to the popular wisdom that students cannot concentrate in such a vivid environment, Berea school officials report no negative effect on student performance and say they find students take better care of the school.

Each of these instructional programs takes a slightly different tack; some required substantial investments of time and/or money, others were put into place with only modest costs. Several of the programs involved sig-

nificant restructuring of the school instructional program; several others did not.

Common to each of the programs, however, is a commitment to make schools a pleasant, useful place for students; the involvement of a broad base of those in the school "family" —students, parents and members of the school staff; and a willingness to make changes.

So, too, was each of the programs viewed as an investment to be nurtured with support, commitment and patience. These factors combined, the school officials interviewed for this report said, to produce handsome dividends—both for the schools and for students.

Working With Staff

To a large degree, the teacher's actions, attitude and abilities set the mood which determines whether or not the classroom environment is conducive to learning.

In order to help teachers become more effective in creating and maintaining a productive learning environment, school districts across the U.S. are implementing a variety of inservice training programs.

Those inservice administrators contacted in preparing this report indicate that inservice training in student discipline often is viewed skeptically by teachers who disagree with the methods or with what they perceive to be the district's attempt to foist onto their shoulders responsibility for student discipline. Therefore, these program officials are quick to emphasize the need to explain to teachers the purposes and goals of such inservice programs.

The importance of wide staff acceptance and support cannot be overestimated, as William Glasser, in a report on his discipline training program, points out:

> "... it has long been our contention that in order to have any school-wide program viable, a majority of the staff has to not only support the program but also become actively involved in it ... [Our] surveys indicated in most instances that the higher the percentage of faculty involved, the greater the effectiveness of the program."

Good instruction—good discipline

The teacher's roles as instructor and disciplinarian are not mutually exclusive; rather, good instruction often alleviates most discipline problems which, in turn, leaves more time for instruction. This is the premise behind Dr. Frederic Jones' Classroom Management Training Program, which guides teachers in improving instruction and discipline skills.

Jones' training focuses on general teaching techniques, emphasizing the need for specific instructions to students about coursework and expectations, positive feedback, and helping pupils break down particular tasks into precise steps. Using these instructional tips, then, teachers report having more time to work with those individual students who may be having trouble. This helps curb students' feelings of helplessness and exclusion.

Low-key approach

In general, Jones advocates a low-key approach to discipline. Early recognition of disruptions, quick response, strong eye contact, close physical proximity and calmness are points Jones attempts to instill in teachers. The idea behind Jones' approach is to prevent, rather than terminate, disruptive behavior.

A large part of the training takes the form of role-playing. Teachers practice instructional and disciplinary skills in a mock classroom setting. The program coach offers corrective feedback.

'Pyramid' training

Moreover, the program utilizes "pyramid teacher training," and thus is likely to be especially appealing to budget-conscious districts. In pyramid training, a certain number

of teachers are trained in the program. These teachers, in turn, become coaches who train other district teachers. This means outside consultants need not be hired every time a new group of teachers is to receive the training.

Track record

Jones happily reports that from research to date, Classroom Management Training has consistently doubled the productivity of the bottom half of the class in both suburban and inner-city elementary schools and, at the same time, has helped reduce student disruptions by more than seventy percent.

This positive appraisal is corroborated by Patricia Wilson, Research and Evaluation Coordinator in the Minnetonka Public Schools (Minnesota), a district that tried the program. In addition to the benefits that have accrued to students, Wilson credits the training with helping to bring about a significant improvement in teacher morale. Following the training, teachers feel better equipped to handle their students, and this confidence has a positive effect on discipline in the classroom, she says.

The Minnetonka schools have taken Jones' ideas a step further, offering a special session for principals. The rationale: principals are key actors in each building and the success of a discipline program requires their understanding and support.

Ten-step approach to discipline

William Glasser's ten-step approach to discipline takes a tack that differs from Jones' program. Indeed, Glasser's method focuses almost exclusively on discipline and not instructional techniques per se (although, as mentioned earlier, discipline and instruction are intertwined.) Further, his approach outlines a systematic plan for teachers to follow, rather than offering a skills package.

Briefly, Glasser's ten step approach is based on the following precepts:

- The teacher must work to foster personal bonds of trust with students; this trust, Glasser maintains, is a requisite to honest, open communication between teachers and students.
- Behavior rather than feelings is presented. The teacher initially asks a student *what* he did, not *why* he did it. A student cannot change his behavior unless he is aware of exactly what he did wrong. Present behavior is dealt with: the teacher does not dwell on the past. Reminding a student of past misconduct leaves him with the sense that things will never change.
- The teacher leads the student to the point where he can make a value judgement on his behavior. Given enough time, most students will come to the conclusion that misconduct is not beneficial to them.
- A plan to change behavior will have a reasonably good chance of success if the student is involved in its formation. The teacher helps the pupil develop a plan that is both specific and realistic. By setting defined, desired objectives, students are able to experience the satisfaction of having accomplished something.
- The student must make a commitment, either a verbal agreement or an elaborate contract. This instills a sense of responsibility in the student.
- The teacher accepts no excuses if the student fails to follow his plan. To do so suggests that the teacher feels the student is unable to achieve the objectives of the plan. If the first plan fails, a new plan is drawn up, and the teacher reaffirms confidence and expectations that the student will succeed.
- The teacher does not resort to punishment. Instead, the teacher repeats the process of making plans, setting objectives and dealing positively with the student.

- Finally, the teacher does not give up. Students may count on teachers letting things slide. When they realize that the teacher is being persistent, positive behavior is most likely to result. Teachers, on the other hand, must be willing to put in the time and effort necessary to realize this positive behavior.

In spite of all precautions and good intentions, school rules will be broken and punishment will be necessary. In these cases, Glasser advocates "logical consequences," rather than conventional punishment. According to this system, after specific rules are established and made known, certain "logical consequences" are set up for their infraction. Students who break a rule know exactly what to expect—punishment is not arbitrary. Moreover, it is made clear to students that the consequences are a result of unacceptable behavior and do not reflect on them individually.

'In-house' program

Rather than choosing to try one of the nationally disseminated discipline programs, the Rock River, Wyo., Public School District developed its own system several years ago.

Debra House, architect of the "Learning About Me" project, explains that the K-12 program was designed primarily for schools in rural areas that often do not have access to counselors, psychologists, or specialists in student behavior.

As in most other successful practices, the project is steeped in positivism and communication. The system is based on a philosophy which stipulates that all people have certain basic needs, among them affection, respect, wealth, and enlightenment. Teachers are trained on how they can apply this philosophy in the classroom. For instance, when a student breaks a rule of behavior, the teacher might discuss these needs with the student and attempt to determine which needs the pupil was attempting to fulfill.

The Rock River district has borrowed Glasser's emphasis on responsibility—students are expected to take responsibility for their actions, and must be prepared to accept the consequences.

Success takes time . . .

Interviews with administrators, guidance counselors and teachers suggest that time is perhaps the single most important ingredient of successful staff inservice programs which deal with improving student discipline. Time is needed to develop a workable program; teachers must be allowed enough time to understand the goals and methods of the inservice program; teachers must then take enough time to work with students; and finally, school boards and administrators must be committed and patient enough to await the results.

Working With the Community

To board members, administrators, teachers, and other school district personnel, they are "students." But young people attending school also are Little League stars, girl and boy scouts, neighborhood bullies, newspaper carriers, and children of proud—or not so proud—parents. It follows, then, that solutions to disciplinary problems are rooted in the total community—both in and outside school.

A child's home environment and experiences often determine the quality of his experiences outside the home. Relationships with parents and siblings are bound to have an effect on a student's attitudes toward teachers and other school officials. The home environment, be it permissive or strict, undoubtedly will influence the child's expectations of—and ability to function in—the classroom environment.

So, too, do parents play a key role in student discipline through their relations and involvement with the school. Parents who are informed about school activities and programs are more likely to support and reinforce the efforts of school staff.

Getting parents involved

The PASS program (Positive Alternatives to Student Suspension), which originated in the Pinnelas County, Fla., Schools, is a comprehensive discipline project which has been adopted by school districts in 27 states. The program involves, among other things, inservice training for teachers, a student time-out room and expanded counseling services. PASS differs from most other discipline programs, however, in that it actively involves parents.

The twelve-week long course is offered to students—either individually or in small groups—both during and after school. The instructor helps students develop positive alternatives for dealing with difficulties at home, while helping them become aware of their own strengths and responsibilities.

Parents are drawn into the PASS program through Parent Training Groups. In these sessions, parents are encouraged to share their concerns and receive help with specific problems. Parents are made aware of the program through the school-building PTA, school newspaper, special mailings and word-of-mouth.

A different approach to parent involvement is taken by the Oconto, Wis., Unified School District. There, superintendent John LeMay prepares five-minute radio spots which are broadcast over local stations on alternating Friday mornings. These broadcasts cover a wide range of topics, from a discussion of the school lunch program to an explanation of a new instructional program. The spots are not necessarily discipline-related, but parent awareness of the school system in general, as pointed out earlier, usually has a positive effect on discipline.

In one discipline-related broadcast, superintendent LeMay pointed out the close correlation between regular school attendance and performance in school. In another broadcast, LeMay pointed out the purely practical aspect of good attendance: that a steady attendance record is highly attractive to employers.

The total community

Parents are not the only community faction who can or should aid the schools in developing positive student discipline. When called upon for help, community leaders have been able to offer advice, jobs, counseling and general support of students and schools. Atlanta is one city where the whole community is working to solve disciplinary problems.

The commitment to community involvement there began with the district's discipline policy, adopted by the school board after more than four years of preparation. The policy—itself the result of community input—stresses community participation in school discipline programs. Once the policy was in place, the school system turned to Dr. Mae Christian to get the community's ideas off paper and into action.

Advisory councils

Atlanta's community involvement plan includes school-wide and city-wide advisory councils. These councils are composed of the Parent-Teacher-Student-Association presidents, community leaders, politicians and other local agency and organization heads. At advisory council meetings, participants deal with specific issues related to school discipline. And when necessary, groups from the advisory councils go into the schools and work with administrators and teachers. One of their primary functions, though, is working with parents. Council members visit homes and discuss school problems and concerns with parents. They also make sure that parents understand school discipline guidelines and *their* responsibilities under those policies. In addition to creating awareness, council participants also work with families in which a child is experiencing problems. Atlanta's council members also attempt to instill in parents a positive outlook toward school and discipline. They never tell parents that their children are "bad." Rather, problems and concerns are discussed and potential solutions are explored.

In addition to working with parents, the advisory councils work with the Youth Development Center, an Atlanta law enforcement agency. They assist in the follow-up and counseling of students who have reentered school.

As many school officials understand all too well, often the very parents that programs are designed to help are the ones who are reluctant to participate. Dr. Christian and the Atlanta schools share this concern. "It's a tough job," Christian commented, "but we've found that through persistent efforts, we can recruit parents who are willing to participate."

Utilizing community resources

Not all successful community involvement programs are as extensive as Atlanta's. The Baltimore County Public Schools, for example, have tapped the resources of one outside community source in their CAMS (Comprehensive Approach to Multi-Suspended Students) program.

CAMS is a joint effort of the Baltimore County Board of Education and the Baltimore County Department of Health. The program offers a wide array of services to students in the school building.

Parents are included in CAMS. Contracts, drawn up between students, counselors and parents, stipulate that parents reinforce good behavior by providing incentives, such as an allowance, if the student receives a good weekly report from school. In addition, health department staff provide consultation services to school staff, as well as counseling to individual students.

Data from a four-year follow-up study of students in CAMS compared with a control group of similar types of students not in a special program indicate that the program has been successful, both academically and behaviorally.

Keeping the public apprised

The aforementioned programs point to one conclusion: that the community can provide valuable and broad assistance to help school districts curb student disciplinary problems. But in order for community leaders to help, school districts must let them in on what is going on—both accomplishments and problems. Informational meetings and media campaigns for parents and other citizens may be utilized in the initial stages to create awareness of the problem and, later, to formulate action plans. Community psychologists and social workers can advise school personnel and counsel students. Other citizens can offer jobs, perhaps working with schools to establish work-study programs which may motivate uninterested students and potential dropouts. And parents, in the process of learning how they can help their children at home, may well take a more active role in supporting the policies and practices of their local schools.

A Systematic Management Plan for School Discipline

*This report has explored a variety of programs, each of whose major purpose falls in one of three areas: decreasing student alienation, staff development, and community involvement. Dr. Daniel Duke, professor of teacher education at Stanford University, has developed a comprehensive Systematic Management Plan for School Discipline (SMPSD) which incorporates ideas in all of these areas. The following is a brief sketch of his plan.**

While many people express opinions about why today's students are more disrespectful, disobedient and disenchanted, in reality very little research has been conducted in the area. It is even difficult to say with certainty that young people misbehave more now than they did in the past. I do not presume that I can account in a scientific manner for the recent rash of complaints about student behavior. Instead, I shall try to outline briefly the components of a Systematic Management Plan for School Discipline (SMPSD)—a set of guidelines that is intended to provide a more constructive and comprehensive approach to the problem of school discipline.

The following assumptions about the way student misbehavior is handled in most schools serve as the basis for the SMPSD:

1. School personnel rarely meet to discuss discipline policies and problems. Discipline is perceived to be the administration's concern.
2. Time is not allocated for teachers and administrators to gather accurate data on discipline problems and to receive in-service training in specific skills for dealing with student misbehavior.
3. Teachers and administrators do not always agree on the origins or appropriate resolution of discipline problems.
4. Discipline problems tend to be seen as classroom rather than school problems.
5. Student misbehavior generally is confronted as it occurs and in a manner inconsistent with past occurrences.

The SMPSD addresses each of these assumptions. It is based on the belief that discipline must be treated in a comprehensive fashion, stressing both prevention and intervention. At present, many "packaged" solutions to discipline problems emphasize preventive measures exclusively, leaving school personnel powerless to deal with problems when they do arise. Other programs focus on intervention tactics while making little attempt to eliminate the root causes of misbehavior.

The school cannot eliminate all causes of misbehavior. Some, such as ineffective parenting and violence on television, lie beyond the school's direct supervision. Other factors, though, are school-based and can be confronted in a systematic and sensible manner by school personnel. These factors include:

- Inconsistent enforcement of school rules by teachers and administrators
- Inconsistently applied consequences for breaking school rules

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- Failure of school personnel to make students aware of school rules
- Failure of school personnel to deal with misbehavior in a prompt and individualized manner
- Failure of school personnel to confront minor problems early, before they become major ones
- Failure of school personnel to involve parents in the resolution of discipline problems

To deal with these and other school-based factors related to student misbehavior, I propose a SMPSD consisting of six basic components. They include provisions for the collection of accurate data on discipline; the development of an awareness of the school as a rule-governed institution; the rewarding of students who obey school rules; the development of conflict resolution mechanisms; the encouragement of a team approach to managing misbehavior; and inservice education dealing with school discipline. The remainder of the article will cover each of these six components separately. While many of the suggestions are more appropriate for secondary than for elementary schools, I feel that elementary educators can also benefit from the general reasoning underlying the SMPSD.

Collecting accurate data on discipline

Perhaps it is too obvious to argue that the resolution of school discipline problems depends on the availability to school personnel of accurate data concerning student misbehavior. Still, I find very few schools that actually provide the time, manpower, and support necessary to obtain data on such items as referrals to the office, teacher complaints, student complaints and disciplinary actions; analyze these data; and publicize the results in school newsletters and communiques to parents. A SMPSD requires more than a few hastily recorded notes jotted down by a beleaguered assistant principal.

To improve data collection, all school personnel concerned with discipline should be delegated some responsibility for keeping uniform records. Once the problem areas become known, uniform record-keeping techniques such as checklists and short forms can replace more time-consuming data collection devices. At regular intervals data from these sources must be analyzed and reported. It does little good to wait until the end of the year to make an annual report on student misbehavior.

One way to make data collection more efficient is for administrators to meet each day after school for ten minutes and debrief each other on the day's discipline problems and actions. A secretary should take minutes. Without regular debriefings, it is too easy for principals and their assistants to lose contact with each other and to become unaware of the problems each is encountering. There is no substitute for shared information. Time must be set aside for such sharing.

Possessing accurate data on sources of discipline problems permits school personnel to attack the problems in a direct, informed manner rather than continuing to put out small fires and trade opinions. In addition, people speculate on the extent to which students misbehave; data can be used to correct erroneous public impressions.

The school as a rule-governed institution

Perhaps no element of the SMPSD is more critical to the prevention of discipline problems than the development of an awareness on the part of students, parents, and school personnel that the school is a rule-governed institution. Such an awareness cannot develop as long as different teachers enforce different rules, administrators apply different punishments for the same offense, and

students complain that they do not know the school rules.

Creating an awareness of the school as a rule-governed institution entails at least five activities:

1. School and classroom rules must be developed collaboratively, with administrators, teachers, students and parents involved. The fewer the rules, the easier they will be to remember and to enforce consistently.

2. Consequences for disobeying the rules must be developed collaboratively.

3. Once developed, rules and consequences for breaking them must be well publicized in the community and well displayed in the school. Parents should receive an annual mailing concerning rules and consequences for breaking rules.

4. Provisions for the consistent enforcement of rules and the consistent application of consequences should be established for the administration and faculty. School personnel should be encouraged to report when rules are not being enforced.

5. School rules and the consequences for breaking them must be included as part of the regular academic curriculum. Special provisions should be made for orienting incoming and transfer students to the rules each year.

Regarding the fifth point, it seems essential that if educators want students to take discipline seriously, they must make school rules part of every student's course of study. I believe that students should be tested annually on school rules. Completed tests should be kept on record for future reference. If a misbehaving student claims he was unaware of a rule, the test he took on the rules can be consulted for verification.

Reward students who obey rules

I wish to underscore the importance of rewarding students who demonstrate they can obey rules. All too often, it seems, educators take for granted that well-behaved students receive intrinsic rewards for their conduct. These educators turn around and offer tangible rewards to misbehaving students in a sincere effort to bring about improved behavior. Students who consistently obey rules must wonder if their good conduct is worth it.

Conflict resolution mechanisms

The previous two components of the SMPSD primarily concerned the prevention of school discipline problems. What happens when preventive efforts fail, as they will on occasion? It is vital for a school to possess a recognized procedure for resolving problems when they arise.

Dealing with a misbehaving student need not always involve referral to the principal's office. One alternative involves negotiation as a first step in conflict resolution. Negotiation can include the following components: reaching agreement about what actually happened; listing various ways of correcting the situation; and consenting to try a particular solution. If a negotiation model is adopted, it will be necessary to distinguish in advance between negotiable and non-negotiable items. The latter might involve instances of violence, possession of drugs or weapons, and theft.

Additional conflict resolution mechanisms included an on-campus ombudsman's office to receive and redirect (but not resolve) complaints from school inhabitants and student courts. Urie Bronfenbrenner, in his enlightening study of schools in the United States and the Soviet Union, discusses how Soviet students effectively use peer review procedures to deal with behavior problems. American school administrators are urged to utilize the peer group as a positive influence

on student behavior and stop accepting the notion that the peer group inevitably works against school authorities.

Resolving problems that occur during class almost always should entail individual contact between the teacher and the student, either after class or after school. Teachers are encouraged to develop contingency plans for dealing with anticipated discipline problems in class. After several months in the classroom, most teachers can predict most of the problems they will encounter. Working out in advance exactly how to handle different classroom disruptions can mean the difference between being caught off guard and reacting to problems in a smooth, even-tempered way.

Team approach to managing misbehavior

Administrators alone cannot implement a SMPSD. They need the active support and involvement of teachers, parents, community resource people and ultimately students. Perhaps the first step in developing a team approach to school discipline is to schedule time for periodic faculty troubleshooting sessions. These sessions are occasions when teachers and administrators can share data on school discipline and try to anticipate future problems (i.e., which students are beginning to fall behind in their work or seem depressed). Lest these troubleshooting sessions become just another waste of faculty time, they should adhere to specific guidelines:

1. Discussions must involve references to specific students rather than broad statements, vague feelings, or anecdotes.
2. All discussions must be kept in strictest confidence.
3. For each student who is discussed, a specific plan of action must be adopted before the meeting ends.
4. One person must assume responsibility for seeing that the plan of action is attempted.
5. This individual must report back to the group at the very next troubleshooting session about the success of the plan.
6. If the plan is unsuccessful, consideration should be given to calling a case conference.

The case conference is the second component of a school's team approach to school discipline. Case conferences concern students who have become chronic behavior (or academic) problems. The purpose is similar to the troubleshooting session in that a plan of action must be developed, but the case conference presumes that the problem has passed the early stages.

The importance of involving parents in handling school discipline problems cannot be overemphasized. Often minor problems mushroom simply because parents are not speedily informed. Time should be allocated each day for a secretary or administrator to phone parents and notify them of problems or progress with their children. The time required for a daily phoning hour is a solid investment in improved school discipline as well as public relations. In many instances, parents can be involved in contracts with their children to improve school behavior. The faculty and administration that is too busy, apathetic or fearful to involve parents when their children misbehave in school is ensuring continued problems and acting irresponsibly.

School authorities should make an effort to enlist the services of community members as well as parents. Sometimes the strategic involvement of a minister, probation officer, Little League coach, social worker, clinical psychologist, doctor, or other individual concerned with young people can provide the extra measure of assistance needed to improve a student's behavior. Training programs in Stanford and Boston currently are preparing pediatricians who can deal with school-related problems. One school in Texas has involved a pediatrician in its regular faculty troubleshooting sessions.

Inservice education on school discipline

To many educators, the solution to school discipline problems is simply to hire more teachers, thus reducing the teacher-student ratio and providing more individualized attention per student. In these days of budget cutbacks and declining enrollment, however, it is unrealistic to assume that more teachers will be available for fewer students. Inservice education for the existing staff seems to be a more practical focus of effort.

Providing for the continuous inflow of new ideas concerning school discipline and the occasional training of school personnel in specific skills for handling student misbehavior is the final element of the SMPSD. In my studies of urban, suburban and rural high schools in New York and California, I have found fewer than ten percent of the schools sampled sponsored a single inservice activity (workshop, superintendent's day, orientation program, or extension course) related to school discipline. School administrators cannot assume, unfortunately, that their teachers have acquired discipline-related skills in college.

I should add that teachers are not the only persons needing training in the area of school discipline. In a SMPSD, administrators, counselors, secretaries, custodians and other staff members must share some of the responsibility for student behavior. As a result, they too need inservice opportunities. Admittedly, there are not an overabundance of models for effective inservice education.

For student discipline programs to work, schools must confront discipline problems in a comprehensive way and on a school-wide rather than a class-by-class basis. Good discipline is not the reward of schools that place assistant principals in early graves or deny students their basic rights as citizens. Good discipline results from concerted efforts by administrators, teachers, students, parents and community resource people to determine the exact nature of school behavior problems, identify their causes, and confront corrective measures in a forthright and fair manner.

Appendix: Sample Discipline Policies

NSBA does not necessarily endorse the adoption of any of the following discipline policies. Rather, they are samples of comprehensive policies discussed in this report, and are included here as frameworks within which school boards may develop and revise policies to suit their needs. Other sample policies are available from NSBA's Educational Policies Services Clearinghouse at NSBA offices in Washington.

Discipline in the David Douglas Schools

(Source: David Douglas School District, Portland, Ore.)

David Douglas schools have a fine tradition of good discipline. However, parents, teachers and administrators have asked that the rules governing discipline and conduct be written down so that each group may know what is required. They feel, by working together under clearly stated and consistently enforced regulations, we can continue David Douglas' tradition for firm and fair discipline.

Definition

Discipline is the positive direction of behavior toward established standards of conduct, fully understood and based upon reason, judgment and the rights of others.

Ideal discipline is *self*-directed and *self*-controlled. Schools, community and parents share the responsibility for helping students develop *self-discipline.*

Discipline is necessary to assure an orderly environment in which each person may live and learn to his/her full capabilities in harmony with others.

When self-control falters and self-discipline fails, disciplinary forces outside the individual must be imposed to protect the rights of others.

In David Douglas schools, as in the community at large, certain rules and procedures are established to guide students through constructive growth and into mature adulthood. The rules and procedures are basically the same from kindergarten through grade 12. Parents, teachers and others responsible for the welfare and education of these students must cooperate to interpret and enforce these rules.

Procedures

A violation of school rules could result in (a) a conference with the student, (b) notification of parents and (c) appropriate disciplinary action that could include suspension or expulsion.

In addition to the rules and regulations of the David Douglas schools outlined here, all persons are expected to obey the laws of the State of Oregon and of the United States. On school property violation of public law in the following categories will result in action by school authorities regardless of whether or not criminal charges are pressed: arson; assault; burglary; bomb threats; extortion or blackmail; larceny; vandalism; robbery; sale, possession or use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs; trespassing; unlawful interference with or harassment of school authorities.

Parent responsibilities

- Send your child to school as required by Oregon School Law (ORS 339.020); exceptions ORS 339.030.
- Make certain your child's attendance at school is regular and punctual and all absences are properly excused.
- Insist that your child is clean, dressed in compliance with school rules of sanitation and safety, and in a fashion that will not disrupt classroom procedures.
- Be sure your child is free of communicable disease and is in as good health as possible.
- Guide your child from the earliest years to develop socially acceptable standards of behavior, to exercise self-control and to be accountable for his/her actions.
- Teach your child, by word and example, respect for law, for the authority of the school and for the rights and property of others.
- Know and understand the rules your child is expected to observe at school; be aware of the consequences for violations of these rules and accept legal responsibility for your child's actions.
- Instill in your child a desire to learn; encourage a respect for honest work and an interest in exploring broader fields of knowledge.
- Become acquainted with your child's school, its staff, curriculum and activities. Attend parent-teacher conferences and school functions.

Student responsibilities

- Take advantage of the academic opportunities offered at school.
- Support and participate in school activities.
- Attend school regularly and punctually. Excuses for absences or tardiness must be in writing by a parent or guardian. Absences are excused for (a) illness, (b) emergencies beyond student control or

(c) appointments, family trips or school activities all of which must be prearranged. All other absences are unexcused.

- Remain on the school campus during the school day. Permission to leave must be in writing by an administrator, nurse or attendance clerk.
- Be self-controlled, reasonably quiet and non-disruptive in classrooms, hallways, study areas, school buses, on school property and at school activities.
- Be clean and dress in compliance with school rules of sanitation and safety, and in a fashion that will not disrupt classroom procedures.
- Be reasonable, modest, self-controlled, non-suggestive and considerate in your relationships with other students.
- Strive for mutually respectful relationships with teachers.
- Keep your language and gestures respectful and free of profanity or obscenities.
- Respect private, public and school property.
- Obey the school rule against use or possession of tobacco by students on school property or while attending school-sponsored activities.
- Be informed regarding student rights and responsibilities.

Teacher and staff responsibilities

- Reflect a personal enthusiasm for teaching and learning and a genuine concern for the individual student.
- Guide learning activities so students learn to think and reason, assume responsibility for their actions and respect the rights of others.
- Participate in the establishment of school rules and regulations regarding student behavior; explain these rules to students and require observance of them.
- Be fair, firm and consistent in enforcing school rules in classrooms, hallways, restrooms, school buses, on the school campus and at all school-sponsored activities.
- Give positive reinforcement for acceptable behavior.
- Demonstrate, by word and personal example, respect for law and order and self-discipline.
- Refer to a counselor, or administrator, any student whose behavior requires special attention.
- Inform parents regarding student achievement and behavior; and consult with parents whenever necessary.

The principal's responsibilities

- Create the best teaching-learning situation possible, exercising all authority assigned by the superintendent and school board.
- Organize school schedules and teaching assignments and require effective classroom management and instruction.
- Take leadership in establishing reasonable rules and regulations for the well-ordered operation of the school.
- Make these rules and regulations known to and understood by students, parents and all school staff.
- Receive teacher or counselor referrals of students with behavior problems, confer with these students, communicate with parents and set up cooperative procedures for bringing about modification of the student's behavior.
- Be fair, firm and consistent in all decisions affecting students, parents and staff.
- Demonstrate, by word and personal example, respect for law and order, self-discipline and genuine concern for all persons coming under your authority.
- Become acquainted with your students by visiting classrooms and attending school activities.
- Maintain open lines of communication between school and home.

School board, superintendent, district administrators' responsibilities

- Maintain a well-trained staff at all levels.
- Inform the community what is expected of David Douglas students and what happens if rules are violated.
- Give full support to the staff charged with the responsibility for enforcing discipline in accordance with district policy and Oregon law.
- Develop programs which provide for students with special needs.
- Be fair and consistent in making the final decisions regarding those students whose behavior problems have been appealed from individual schools to the superintendent and school board, in accordance with district policy and Oregon law.
- Become acquainted with the schools, staff and students, by visiting buildings regularly and by attending school activities.

Student Discipline

(Source: Ames Community School District, Ames, Iowa)

An important part of the educational process is helping young people become aware of their rights and the responsibilities that accompany those rights. The school has the duty to create an atmosphere in which self-discipline, as an aspect of responsibility, is approached both positively and productively.

Parents must be the first to foster self-discipline within the child at home; the school provides an environment in which this training can be developed further, enabling all students to have the right to pursue their own educational needs without unnecessary disruption by others.

Disciplinary action should follow as closely as possible the infraction and be related directly to the student(s) involved. The teacher is the key to providing disciplinary direction. The principal or a designee should be involved only in those cases in which the student's behavior interferes substantially with the educational program.

For those few students who seem unable or unwilling to adjust self-discipline to the common good and who, consequently, continually disrupt the orderly operation of the school, procedures must be established to prevent and correct abuses. When situations allow, an attempt should be made by teachers, counselors, and administrators, in cooperation with parents, to help troubled students modify their behavior. Department of Public Instruction guidelines indicate that it is appropriate for the principal to suspend a student from classes when necessary. . . .

Section 282.5 of the Code of Iowa provides: The goal of school discipline policies should be to ensure the right of all students to a productive educational environemnt in which they may learn the social skills necessary to develop into mature, responsible young adults, accountable for their own actions.

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(The remainder of this comprehensive policy outlines in detail rules, examples of infractions and procedures for each of the above categories.)

Discipline-Code and Procedures

(Source: Jim Thorpe Public Schools, Jim Thorpe, Penn.)

Student responsibilities

Student responsibilities include regular school attendance, conscientious effort in classroom work, and conformance to school rules and regulations. Most of all, students share with the administration and faculty a responsibility to develop a climate within the school that is conducive to wholesome learning and living.

No student has the right to interfere with the education of his fellow students. It is the responsibility of each student to respect the rights of all who are involved in the educational process.

Students should express their ideas and opinions in a respectful manner so as not to offend or slander others.

The students' responsibilities are to:

1. Be aware of all rules and regulations for student behavior and conduct themselves in accord with them.
2. Be willing to volunteer information in disciplinary cases and cooperate with school staffs, should they have knowledge of importance in relation to such cases.
3. Dress and groom themselves so as to meet fair standards of safety and health, and common standards of decency.
4. Assume that until a rule is waived, altered or repealed, it is in full effect.
5. Assist the school staff in running a safe school for all students enrolled therein.
6. Be aware of and comply with state and local laws.
7. Exercise proper care when using public facilities and equipment.
8. Attend school daily, except when excused, and be on time at all classes and other school functions.
9. Make all necessary arrangements for making up work when absent from school.

10. Pursue and attempt to complete the course of study prescribed by state and local school authorities.
11. Avoid inaccuracies in student newspapers or publications and indecent or obscene language.

School jurisdiction

1. On the school grounds during and immediately before or immediately after school hours;
2. On the school grounds as either a spectator or participant at any other time when school is being used by a school group;
3. Off the school grounds at any school activity, function or event as a participant or spectator; and
4. During the time required in going to and from the home, including time spent at bus stops and on school bus transportation.

Administrative responsibilities

The administrators' responsibilities are to:

1. Guarantee student rights and privileges to those who demonstrate their willingness to accept accompanying responsibilities.
2. Insure consistent and equitable application of the school's discipline policy.

It is recognized that extenuating circumstances might arise regarding the interpretation on the application of the school's discipline policy. When it is found to be in the best interest of an individual or the total school community, administrative prerogative will be utilized.

Teacher responsibilities

Each teacher is responsible for handling his/her own discipline problems which are of common or minor nature, and punishment (short of corporal punishment) shall be the responsibility of the teacher to administer.

If the discipline problem is of a serious nature, it is the responsibility of the teacher to inform the administrator of all the details in the case. Any punishment shall be the responsibility of the administrator to oversee.

This policy shall be followed in handling routine classroom conduct situations, as well as, for initial action to many of the regulations contained in this document. In many of the following regulations, the initial step to handling violations is listed as "teacher responsibility." The following steps are proposed as being the procedure to be followed for "teacher responsibility."

1. The teacher should discuss the problem with the student preferably on non-class time. A teacher might assign a personal detention to provide this time or find time during the school day when both parties are available.

2. The teacher should contact the students' parents (by telephone or through a teacher-parent conference) concerning the problem. It is in the best interest of all parties concerned that parents be involved with problems when they start rather than after they get out of control.
3. The teacher should document all incidents of student behavior problems and indicate steps taken to solve them.

Student rights

Student Government

Student Government represents an integral part of the total governing body of our public schools. Students have an inherent right and responsibility to be cognizant of and instrumental in the preparation of school policies and regulations relevant to their curricular activities, extracurricular activities, and school environment.

The administration has established open channels of communications through which students express their individual or group concerns, suggestions and grievances, which are then formally and informally deliberated upon.

It is our sincere belief that our continued recognition of students' rights and responsibilities will develop in our youth a student philosophy that will continually be employed to nurture internal strengths and deter the inward diffusion of degrading attitudes.

Freedom of Expression

Students have the right to express themselves in any manner unless such expression directly interferes with the educational process, threatens immediate harm to the welfare of the school or community, or encourages unlawful activity, or interferes with another individual's rights. . . .

Suspensions

1. A student may be temporarily suspended for an offense by the principal, without a hearing, in accordance with policies of the Board of School Directors, for a period of up to three school days.
2. If an informal hearing before the principal is offered to the student and the student's parents or guardian within that three day period, the suspension may be for a period of up to ten school days, in accordance with guidelines established by the Board of School Directors.
3. The purpose of the informal hearings is to enable the student to meet with the appropriate school official to explain the circumstances surrounding the event for which the student is being suspended, to demonstrate that there is a case of mistaken identity or to show that there is some compelling reason why the student should not be suspended. The informal hearing also encourages the

student's parents or guardian to meet with the principal to discuss ways by which future offenses can be avoided.

4. Students shall be permitted to make up, without penalty, exams and work missed while being disciplined, within guidelines established by the Board of School Directors. . . .

(The policy goes on to explain specific rules and disciplinary procedures.)